

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8193

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RE.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ACOM, ETEL

SUBJECT: APO PRIVILEGES FOR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND
NON DOD CONTRACTORS.

REF: SECDEF 011920Z AUG 74: SEOUL 0727

1. COMUSK WAS ADVISED IN DECEMBER 17 LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT OF ARMY ADJUTANT GENERAL TAHT DOD HAS NO LEGAL AUTHORITY TO EXTEND MILITARY POSTAL SERVICE TO VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND NON-DOD CONTRACTORS AND THAT APO PRIVILEGES EXTENDED TO SUCH AGENCIES AND CONTRACTORS IN KOREA SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN WITHIN NINETY DAYS OF NOTICE. ADJUTANT GENERAL'S LETTER ENCLOSED REFERENCED SECDEF MESSAGE WHICH WITHDREW APO PRIVILEGES FROM VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND NON-DOD CONTRACTORS IN VIMZNAM AFTER TOP LEVEL DOD REVIEW OF AN APPEAL BY AMBASSADOR MARTIN. LONG LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS DENIED PRIVILEGE IN VIETNAM INCLUDED ALL USAID/AMERICAN EMBASSY CONTRACTORS AS WELL AS OTHER NON-DOD CONTRACTORS AND US SPONSORED CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS.

2. PURSUANT TO THEIR INSTRUCTION COMUSK HAS ASKED US TO IDENTIFY CONTRACTORS OR GROUPS CURRENTLY RECEIVING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MAIL THROUGH APO CHANNEL IN CARE OF THE EMBASSY AND TO

NOTIFY THESE ORGANIZATIONS THAT THE SERVICE WILL BE TERMINATED AS OF APRIL 25. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES (I.E. HOLT, SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS, ETC.) HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED SEPARATELY BY COMUSK THAT THEY MUST CEASE USING SERVICE BY APRIL 1.

3. OUR REVIEW INDICATES THT THOSE RECEIVING APO MAIL THROUGH EMBASSY WHO WOULD BE AFFECTED INCLUDE SIX EMBASSY (AID) CONTRACTORS, THE FULBRIGHT GRANTEES AND AAFLI ORGANIZATION. GIVEN HIGH INCIDENCE OF LOSS, THEFT, ILLICIT INSPECTION, AND CUSTOMS DIFFICULTIES IN KOREAN POSTAL SERVICE, LOSS OF THIS PRIVILEGE WILL CREATE SUBSTANTIAL PROBLEMS FOR GROUPS CONCERNED. WE ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED REGARDING PROBLEM OF PROTECTING OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS TO AND FROM THESE GROUPS. BECAUSE OF OUR OFFICIAL INTEREST IN THEM WE BELIEVE DENIAL OF THEIR APO PRIVILEGE IS NOT IN U.S. INTEREST. ACCORDINGLY, REQUEST DEPARTMENT REVIEW LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE WHETHER SOME MEANS CAN BE FOUND TO COVER AID CONTRACTORS, FULBRIGHTERS AND AAFLI. FULBRIGHTERS INCIDENTALLY, WERE NOT ON LIST OF THOSE FROM WHOM APO PRIVILEGES WITHDRAWN IN VIETNAM.

4. WE RECOGNIZE VOLUNTARY AGENCY PROBLEM MORE DIFFICULT SINCE US INTERESTS NOT AS DIRECTLY INVOLVED AND WE ASSUME QUESTION WAS THOROUGHLY AIRED IN CASE VIETNAM. THERE IS US INTEREST, HOWEVER. THESE ORPHANGES ARE TO CONSIDERABLE EXTENT SPONSORED BY US CITIZENS AND SOURCES OF FUNDS; ROUGHLY TWO THIRDS OF ORPHANS GO EVENTUALLY TO US HOMES; AND FIVE TO TEN PER CENT ARE OFFSPRING OF AMERICAN G.I.S. SEOLAG NEED FOR APO IS SUBSTANTIAL AND THERE WILL UNSUAL RZZN OBJECTIONS RAISED; KOREAN PRESS HAS ALREADY CARRIED BRIEF FACTUAL ARTICLES ON VOLAG LOSS OF APO PRIVILEGES. VOLAGS IN KOREA USE APO EXCLUSIVELY TO BRING IN USED CLOTHES AND BABY FOOD FOR ORPHANS; THEY DO NOT SEND MAIL OUT OF KOREA VIA APO. THEIR PAST TROUBLES WITH INTERNATIONAL MAIL, PARTICULARLY KOREAN CUSTOMS, HAVE BEEN SUCH THAT THEY CLAIM THEY WILL FOR MOST PART LOSE THESE CONTRIBUTIONS WITH LOSS OF APO. IF APO IS DEFINITELY RULED OUT IN VOLAG LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CASE IS DEPARTMENT AWARE OTHER ALTERNATIVES; HAS ANY ALTERNATIVE BEEN FOUND IN CASE OF VIETNAM?

5. ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED DO NOT HAVE MUCH TIME TO MAKE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS. ACCORDINGLY EARLY CONSIDERATION QUESTION RAISED WOULD BE APPRECIATED. SNEIDER

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